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ABSTRACT

This publication reports on a study to examine the failures of social institutions to prepare teenage parents to support themselves and their children. Chapter 1 explores issues involved in helping young parents achieve economic independence. Obstacles to economic self-sufficiency are discussed. Chapter 2 reviews existing programs' attempts to meet the goal of economic self-sufficiency. Approaches that work are briefly described, and a program planning checklist is provided. Chapter 3 reviews the steps involved in building a community coalition with sufficient expertise and clout to act successfully as an advocate for change in policies that affect local service delivery. Chapter 4 considers the policy implications of improving services for teenage parents. Chapter 5 makes recommendations for an advocacy agenda. Chapter 6 provides information on additional resources to consult about improving employment and other important services for young parents. Organizations, publications, and programs are included. (YLB)

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A Time For Transition

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TIME FOR TRANSITION

Teenage Parents and Employment

1985

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TIME FOR TRANSITION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Acknowledgments	5
Introduction	6
Chapter 1 Economic Self-Sufficiency for Teenage Parents	7
Chapter 2 Service Delivery: Issues and Innovations	10
Chapter 3 Getting Started: Community Strategies for Change	17
Chapter 4 A Brief Policy Perspective: Problems and Possibilities	21
Chapter 5 Recommendations: The Advocacy Agenda	23
Chapter 6 Additional Resources	24
Bibliography	30

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INTRODUCTION

Time for Transition: Preparing Teenage Parents for Economic Self-Sufficiency

For many decades considerable professional and public concern has focused on the social and psychological implications of teenage pregnancy. We are beginning to acknowledge that premature childbearing is a major social problem in this country, and that a teenage parent's personal dilemma reflects complex institutional failures. In particular, it is increasingly apparent that the education and employment preparation we offer youth is not sufficient to their need. Our social institutions simply have not prepared teenage parents to support themselves and their children. And the cost of that failure is staggering.

One of the objectives of this study was to examine those institutional failures; to explore the issues involved in helping young parents achieve economic independence; to review existing programs' attempts to meet that goal, and to consider the policy implications of improving services for teenage parents.

For two years the project staff interviewed service providers, researchers, community leaders, policy makers, and public interest advocates. We discussed their views on the problems associated with helping teen parents, and talked about experimental efforts developed to assist these young people in the transition to economic independence.

Time for Transition presents a summary of what we learned. We hope it will stimulate further research, but more important, we mean it to be of immediate use to the practitioners, community leaders, and policy makers who already wrestle with the problem of teenage pregnancy and childbirth in their communities.

A final note: Because teenage mothers most often have the primary nurturing and financial responsibility for their children, most concern about teenage parents is necessarily focused on young women. This perspective is reflected in large measure in this report. However, teenage fathers also need institutional incentives to stay connected to their sons and daughters. They too require the job training which will enable them to contribute financially to their children's upbringing and the psychological support which will enable them to contribute emotionally.

Chapter One

Economic Self-Sufficiency for Teenage Parents

I try my best for (my child). I want a future for myself to show her that she can do it too. I don't want her to have the teenage life I had.

> Felicita Garcia, *Powers of Desire: The Politics of Sexuality*

We say, "This baby came early in your life, but you can adapt and do well."

> Daphne Busby, founder of the Sisterhood of Black, Single Mothers of Brooklyn, New York.

Each year in the United States, a half million teenage girls and women, the majority of whom are unmarried, become parents. They represent a higher rate of teenage motherhood than that of any other industrialized nation.

Some pregnant teenagers drift into parenthood not because they want to be mothers, but because they cannot manage the steps needed to secure an abortion. They are unable to face the possibility of pregnancy. They are afraid to go for an accurate pregnancy test, and they are inexperienced at arranging their own health care; they worry that they cannot afford the cost. They fear pain; they are anxious about whether parental permission is required, or they are intimidated by what they imagine to be the moral disapproval of others.

Most young mothers are ill-equipped to understand or manage the responsibilities of parenthood. As teenagers they lack the experience, education, and training needed to support themselves and a child. In addition, the demands of parenthood make it more difficult for them to find time to make the transition to adulthood; the time to work out the developmental emotional issues which are a part of growing up, the time to tackle the practical tasks of acquiring job skills and economic independence, the time to experiment, make mistakes, and change course.

Young mothers come disproportionately from backgrounds shaped by poverty, family disintegration, racial discrimination, and unemployment. A teenage parent who grows up in such an environment is less likely to have a supportive network of family, friends, and community groups upon which to draw as she makes the transition to adulthood and self-sufficiency. These young women are especially vulnerable to becoming dependent upon public services and private charity, which will enable her and her children to survive — but not well.

Like most women, teenage mothers have been socialized for adult roles which focus on marriage, motherhood, homemaking, and other stereotyped helping roles. Their aspirations for work outside the home are distorted by their ignorance of alternatives they could realistically pursue. The teenage mothers who do enter the labor market all to frequently work in jobs traditionally held by women — jobs which offer low wages, restricted benefits, and limited opportunities for advancement.

Obstacles to Economic Self-Sufficiency

Many teen mothers want to work or to continue their education after their children are born. However, the obstacles they face are formidable. First, many teen mothers suffer the disadvantages that all poor children experience. For example, many lack basic literacy. A teacher comments:

A majority of the pregnant girls in this school perform far below grade level in very basic skills. At sixteen years old, many girls don't know what a country is, why we celebrate George Washington's birthday, or even how to write one complete sentence. I once compared some of my students' papers with those of third-grade students in another school and got pretty depressed. It is ridiculous to have students memorize the contributions of ancient

civilizations when they don't even grasp the meaning of the word "contribution"! Of what use are concepts and facts that just bounce off students who do not have the tools — or believe they don't have the tools — for learning? Why can't we provide an education that encourages creativity, nourishes minds, and broadens perspectives? Why can't schools be more interesting than "Days of Our Lives"?

As a result of their lack of academic skills, many poor teen mothers are not eligible for government-sponsored job training programs. Even when they participate in programs for disadvantaged youth, it can take a long time for them to advance sufficiently to be ready for the job market.

Second, many teenage mothers come from families where they do not receive the practical emotional and financial support they need to cope with their predicament. For example, a Chicago administrator whose program serves A.F.D.C. mothers says:

> We are teaching basic middle-class ways. Without such know-how these young women can't get their foot in the door for job interviews.

Even when they mean to be supportive, a young mother's family can be a major source of tension — especially if she lives at home. The family and the young mother must settle who is to care for the child, what child-rearing practices are to be used, how much time the mother will spend away from the baby, and how her time away from home will be used. Frequently families disagree about their expectations for the young parent. Young mothers often face similar conflicts with the fathers of their children.

Another impediment to teen mothers' ability to become self-sufficient is their frequently unrealistic understanding of work. They do not know what work entails. They do not have a clear sense of the kind of jobs they can pursue. Most know few adults who have experienced satisfaction as workers. Like many female adolescents, teen mothers have usually not been brought up to take themselves seriously as workers. They are taught traditional notions about "women's work," which means that their concern about others' well-being at home and on the job can interfere with their pursuing work for its own rewards. Too often they regard marriage as the solution to their economic problems, despite the fact that most will have to be the primary financial support of their children.

Further, a majority of young mothers do not use the resources available to them to increase their ability to support themselves and their children. Some are seeking a time to enjoy their babies, and do not see themselves as needing help. Some believe that even with hard work they will always be poor, and see no particular value in being working poor rather than welfare poor. Some do not know about the assistance available to them.

Some cannot negotiate the many service systems they must draw upon in order to pursue their goals. Some have such negative experiences with service providers that they retreat to the security of familiar faces.

Moreover, the available system of services scarcely caters to the needs of young mothers. The programs of institutions which serve youth are frequently geared toward teenagers with fewer problems. Public assistance offers recipients no incentives to strive for a more satisfying way of life. Job training programs often have requirements that young mothers are unable to meet. Finding affordable and accessible child care remains a nettlesome problem; public subsidies are woefully inadequate for the need, and most of these young women cannot afford a private caretaker. In addition, many adolescents find the public welfare system too complex to negotiate and often receive condescending or even hostile treatment from staff members who find helping them too taxing. Finally, conventional programs for pregnant teens deal too briefly with participants to be effective; they frequently stop after birth and seldom offer employment assistance.

Even in employment programs designed specifically for teen mothers, the problems experienced by participants are daunting. One program director in New York City says:

It's extremely hard for our trainees to handle the

demands on their time. Trainees aren't used to organizing so many details. We expect too much of them initially. For example, they can't make it to a training program five days a week. Many of our participants live on their own, and their child care arrangements are unstable. Even when their kids are enrolled in our child care center, if one gets sick the mother may not have adequate back-up care. In addition, their training time is disrupted by all sorts of appointments to get public services such as A.F.D.C. and Medicaid.

A school-based program's administrator from Michigan underscores this observation:

Young parents must cope with demands on their time from baby, peers, family and helping professionals. No one else their age has so much to do so well. They don't have the experience to manage it all.

Further, service providers sometimes worry that full-time commitments may keep a young mother from establishing a strong, positive relationship with her baby. A Michigan program director expresses her concern:

I'm not sure that the little ones get the consistency and quality of care they need. Some programs treat babies like puppies who can go to the kennel as necessary. Through the child care arrangements we promote, we are either encouraging good parental sense or we are not.

The problems experienced by teenage parents are exacerbated by the fact that there are not enough jobs in America. Many of the jobs which are available to women with low skills pay salaries, which cannot support a household with children and so will keep the families in poverty all their lives. When they can get jobs at all young mothers, like most disadvantaged women, get stuck in sales, service, and clerical positions, which offer low wages, few benefits, and little security.

To overcome the personal, family, and social obstacles which stand between them and employment stability, many young mothers require intensive individual support, not just prenatal care, parenting classes, or the emergency benefits of a public assistance program. Such support is expensive to provide and hard to come by.

Teenage mothers are sometimes accused of lacking the attitude needed to succeed in finding work. In light of the obstacles they face, what strikes most people as a motivation problem may well be resignation in the face of insurmountable odds. An employment counselor observes:

It is simply not true that you can make it if you really try. Most of the youngsters I see have always had the deck stacked against them. I can't let these young mothers blame themselves for not making it. Sure they're responsible for their lives and all that, but they deserve some breaks too.

Chapter Two

Service Delivery: Issues and Innovations

Most teenage mothers want to do well by their children. They have dreams and a capacity for learning, which if properly channeled, can lead them toward positive, healthy, independent lives. While material and psychological support from their families can mitigate the disruptions early parenthood causes for some young women, an unexpected pregnancy presents at least a temporary crisis for most families. Consequently, in order to complete the work of becoming an adult, many young parents will need help from community resources or formal service programs.

If we are to increase the probability that teen mothers will pursue lifelong employment goals, we must first meet their concrete needs for income, food, housing, and emotional support. It is critical that this basics-for-living approach be supplemented with assistance in the area of making a complete transition to literacy, job readiness, and emotional maturity.

However, even with employment preparation, teen parents are not easily assimilated into the labor market. Working full-time is no guarantee of economic independence. The skill level sufficient to open the door of the workplace is not sufficient to sustain a worker there.

Many employment assistance efforts for teen mothers try to do too much too soon. Given limited time for program participation and limited resources for occupational skills training, most programs can only hope to make participants ready for entry-level jobs or ready to pursue further vocational training elsewhere. This cannot ensure economic independence for young mothers.

The benefits of special employment programs for teen parents are not immediate. We must not expect them to be: Achieving economic independence takes several years for all young people. It is marked by false starts and wrong turns. However, teen mothers often have special needs as individuals and as parents, which further prolong and complicate the process. Many must receive considerable personal attention if they are going to overcome the deep feelings of powerlessness and passivity which all too often are among the causes as well as the consequences of teenage parenthood. Many must be given continuing personal support — someone to nurture and nudge them — so they can develop the confidence and survival skills that will enable them to keep moving toward their goals. Some will need public assistance until they are able to become economically stable.

While we do not yet have data which proves that employment programs for teen mothers have a significant long-term impact, we can reasonably draw upon our successes in preparing poor adult women and disadvantaged youth for employment. Common sense suggests that teen mothers will profit from similar approaches if they are tailored to meet their particular needs. We know that obtaining a high school diploma has a positive effect on an individual's chances of employment. We know that programs offering employability education and help finding a job give teens a short-term advantage. We know that employers are looking for job applicants who have a documented work history and whose speech, appearance, and attitudes are appropriate for the workplace. We know that the worker who has the technical skills wanted for a particular line of work is more likely to be hired and valued. Research shows that effective employment programs incorporate these elements:*

- A comprehensive range of services, adaptable to individual participants' needs;
- Real work experience, with business-like

performance expectations, wages or stipends, and close on-the-job supervision;

- Assistance with landing a job;
- Long-term follow-up after placement;
- Staff who can inspire participants and serve as role models;
- Flexible program requirements geared to the goals and abilities of the participants;
- acceptance of the program and its graduates by the private sector.

(*Adapted from "Reducing Youth Unemployment in NYC: The Case For A Fresh Approach," Interface Development Project)

Determining Service Needs

The particular services a young mother requires will vary with a host of personal characteristics such as ethnicity, academic achievement, marital status, socioeconomic status, and personal aspirations. Yet while the interests, abilities, and problems of teenagers differ dramatically, there are a number of common issues service providers try to address.

Generally, employment programs for pregnant teenagers and for teen parents try to:

- Keep participants in some sort of education program until they improve their reading and math abilities or finish high school;
- Expand participants' knowledge of child development and of their roles as parents;
- Educate participants about career options and the world of work;
- Offer assistance with child care;
- Encourage the involvement of the extended family;
- Promote family planning.

A small number of programs offer occupational training or help getting a job. Beyond such practical concerns, these programs attempt to increase young parents' personal aspirations and self-confidence, and to nurture a sense of hope.

School age young mothers are especially needy, particularly if they are dropouts. Full-time employment is seldom an immediate goal for them. By contrast, parents who are eighteen or nineteen are likely to bring more maturity to the pursuit of their goals, and can be directed more effectively toward further education, vocational training or a job.

Challenge and Choice

To ignore the need of teenage parents for help in preparing for employment at a living wage is to allow young people — especially young women and their children — to suffer for others' failures. To neglect teenage mothers for having made a choice that can so limit their lives is to cause them and their children to suffer the effects of the same social problems that propelled so many of them into premature parenthood in the first place.

The failure to meet the developmental needs of young people — to provide them with sex education, family planning, adequate education, sports and arts programs, vocational training, and jobs — encourages early parenthood. It is teenagers without long-term goals and a sense of worth who become parents. Once a teenage couple has a child, the failure to address their needs can contribute to additional unplanned pregnancies, neglect of children by their fathers, poverty, welfare dependency, and the self-destructive behavior caused by depression and hopelessness.

For the most needy adolescent parents, intensive programs which serve as surrogate parents may be the only hope. It therefore seems sensible to broaden the effect of the efforts which have proven fruitful by

replicating successful approaches and by grafting promising features of experimental programs onto existing service models.

Of course this continuing attention is expensive and difficult for many communities to justify. People often feel there are young people more deserving of help. However, women who bore their first child as a teenager and their children are a fundamental part of our most disturbing and expensive social problem. It seems only prudent to help those teenagers who are most at risk of becoming caught up in those problems. An evaluation specialist sums up:

> We've created the conditions which lead young women to become parents too soon. For many youngsters the incentives outweigh the disincentives. Now we've got to clean up the mess.

What Approaches Work

All school-age mothers must be able to have: basic skills in reading, writing, and speaking; help selecting a career; and a job or occupational training. In addition, young women need help to overcome the adverse effects of female socialization such as limited career aspirations and an attitude of resignation in the face of sexist treatment in the workplace, less than equitable wages, and an inadequate share of authority.

Short, well structured programs which concentrate on exposing participants to career alternatives, raising personal aspirations, and building self-confidence seem promising as a first step. The most effective programs are targeted toward young women in their late teens and are usually small, offering a continuum of care.

A typical example is New York City's 53rd Street YWCA. This YWCA has for several years operated a summer employment experience program for one hundred poor, pregnant teens and young mothers, aged sixteen and seventeen. About seventy-five percent of the participants are less than six months pregnant; the remainder have infants younger than one year. Funded by the city's Summer Youth Employment Program, the YWCA furnishes two days a week of group meetings on employability and remedial education and two days a week of employment at local nonprofit organizations. The young women are paid at the minimum wage for six hours a day, four days a week. Joanne Sexton, the project director, emphasizes, "The entire program is aimed at building self-esteem, skills in com munication, and self-awareness. At the same time we help them to be realistic — we teach them to deal with what they have."

Recently a follow-up component has been added. A counselor works with the summer participants all year to offer personal support, and a job developer helps them pursue career goals.

Many special teen parent programs draw upon existing youth employment resources within the sponsoring agency, or within the community at large. For example:

- The Parachute Program for pregnant and parenting teens at Aunt Martha's Youth Service Center in Park Forest, Illinois, and the Family Life Center at the Bridge Over Troubled Waters in Boston use the employment counselors and job developers who are available to all clients of the parent agency.

- The Comprehensive Service for School-Age Parents Program run by the Philadelphia School District collaborates with a local youth employment agency, the Cooperative Occupational Readiness and Placement Project, to provide students with employment preparation and job placement services.

- The Center for Youth Services in Washington, D.C., offers on-site child care so that teen parents can use their extensive employment assistance program.

Other special teen-parent programs add an employment component to their existing services:

- The Teen Parent Assistance Program of the Oakland Unified School District in California has added the School-Age Parent Partnership Program. This collaborative effort joins public and private agencies to pool the resources of many concerned groups. They provide young parents with vocational skills assessment, job readiness education, occupation-specific training, and job placement. The Wayne County Teenage Parent Alternative School in Lincoln Park, Michigan, offers similar services.

- The Urban Affairs Corporation in Houston, Texas, operates a primary health care clinic and child care center at an alternative high school in a low-income neighborhood. To these services they have added Project T.E.A.M., Training and Employment for Adolescent Mothers. In the summer, the T.E.A.M. staff offered summer employment at the minimum wage; in the fall, vocational training in health careers through the Houston Community College.

- Options for Young Parents operates out of the Career Enrichment Park of a Westminster, Colorado, alternative high school. The intensive vocational training component is carefully designed to meet the students' age-specific needs.

- The New Futures School, in Albuquerque, New Mexico, is one of the best known alternative schools for pregnant teens and young parents. It has offered a wide range of vocational services for many years, and has succeeded in obtaining public funding earmarked for training and local job placement.

In a few cases, specially designed employment programs for young parents have been offered at institutions, which traditionally provide more conventional services for youth:

- The YWCA of Boston housed Job Tips, an intensive occupational skills training program for older teen mothers and fathers.

- The YWCA of Brooklyn offers Skills Get Jobs, a word processing training program for young mothers.

- The Illinois Department of Public Aid conducts an experimental Young Parents Program, offering employment guidance to teenage recipients of A.F.D.C.

- Expanding Options for Teen Mothers, located at the New York Technical College in Brooklyn is a comprehensive vocational training, basic skills education, counseling, and job placement program for teen parents aged seventeen to twenty-one. The program gives participants an opportunity to learn a skill in building maintenance and repair. These jobs pay far higher wages than are normally earned by unskilled women in the predominantly female sectors of the labor market. It also aims to help participants transcend the limiting gender stereotypes which have channeled them into early pregnancy and childbirth. Each training cycle lasts for six months and graduates are followed for six months after their programs end.

Perhaps the best known and most rigorously evaluated program for poor, school-aged pregnant teens and teen mothers is Project Redirection, a comprehensive model offering support, education, and employment preparation. Innovative features in the method of delivering these services include use of

volunteers from the community who serve as mentors and individual participation plans, or service contracts. Originally Project Redirection was a demonstration program at four sites nationally. Now a number of schools and community organizations are replicating the project's approach for a second phase of research and evaluation.

In addition, reports from service providers suggest that employment programs, which successfully help teenage mothers move toward economic self-sufficiency must:

- Have options for child care close to the site where mothers attend the program;
- Be flexible about attendance and other program requirements;
- Prepare participants to pursue occupations in which they can provide adequately for themselves and their children;
- Provide opportunities for participants to discuss issues unique to working women and devise practical solutions to the problems they are likely to encounter;
- Draw upon students' life experiences and knowledge as a way of engaging them and building self-esteem;
- Offer concrete, experiential learning activities through which students can expand their knowledge and practical skills;
- Guide each participant through the confusing and time-consuming process of getting public benefits.

Other critical ingredients for program excellence are similar to those which are essential to the effective delivery of any services. Programs must be based on: clear goals and objectives; adequate time for advance planning and start-up; community support; effective interagency relationships; strong leadership and administration; accessible location, convenient hours, and appealing atmosphere; a competent, committed staff; stable funding and a concern for cost-effectiveness; a program design which is holistic in focus and tailored to the special needs of participants; a conscious attempt to empower participants; a case management system; and follow-up after the program ends.

Of all these ingredients, the quality of the staff is the most critical. The staff must be able to engage and inspire young people, set appropriately high expectations, give effective feedback and ample praise, and place participants in positions of trust and responsibility. The staff must constantly nurture young mothers' sense of self-esteem and their aspirations. It is critical, then, for program administrators to ensure that the conditions under which the staff works encourage excellence. The approaches they use are as important as the services they offer.

A Program Planning Checklist

1. Define target population
2. Define program rationale or philosophy
3. Define goals and objectives
4. Get an institutional sponsor
5. Establish eligibility criteria for participants
   - Gender
   - Pregnancy status
   - Socioeconomic background
   - Ethnicity
   - Age
   - School status
   - Academic skills
   - Living arrangements
   - Marital status
6. Define service components
   - Employment assistance—including employability, education, occupational training, internships, placement, and on-the-job support
   - Health care for mother and baby
   - Remedial education and G.E.D. preparation
   - Counseling and advocacy
   - Education in survival skills and family planning
   - Group meetings to build peer support
   - Social and recreational activities
   - Child care
   - Transportation assistance
7. Recruit staff
8. Determine program location, hours, atmosphere
9. Determine how to recruit participants
10. Define approaches to build community support among employers
11. Establish relationships with sister agencies for meshing of services, including case management
12. Determine the duration of services to be offered and of follow-up for participants
13. Project costs and identify funding sources
14. Establish a management information system for monitoring, evaluating, and improving service delivery

A Final Word

A project director in rural New York wrote us:

"After our pilot employment project ended a young mother commented on her evaluation form, 'I think we should talk more about the feeling of being alone without a husband or boyfriend, how to deal with that empty feeling.' This brought me up short. Loneliness and the need for love are vital concerns of teen parents — as they are for most of us — yet our project didn't really deal with these feelings. Of course, no one can provide all the answers to the complexities of love and loneliness, but we should at least recognize their significance when we design programs to help teen parents improve their lives."

Chapter Three

Getting Started: Community Strategies for Change

Too often service providers focus on changing the client and not the system.
Social worker, New York City

No single approach will ensure that the pregnant and parenting teens in any community will get the help they need to achieve economic independence. Both short-term and long-term efforts are needed. While special programs serving young parents need to be strengthened, lasting change depends upon reshaping public policy and the institutions which serve these young people.

This chapter reviews the steps involved in building a community coalition with sufficient expertise and clout to act successfully as an advocate for change in policies which affect local service delivery. The steps are:

- Think coalition
- Assess needs and resources
- Identify problems
- Set priorities
- Plan an action agenda
- Proceed, evaluate, revise plans, and continue

Step One: Think Coalition

Community coalitions, interagency task forces, and advocacy groups are an increasingly appealing way to address local problems. Coalitions allow members to pool resources and can reduce misunderstandings and competition among community institutions. They also furnish an excellent vehicle for enhancing morale, developing practical savvy and clout, and strengthening problem solving efforts.

Coalitions are usually made up of service providers, elected officials, policy makers, volunteers, staff members of public agencies, school personnel, and public interest advocates. To be effective, a coalition should include individuals with demonstrated program expertise and sensitivity to the personal and social implications of teenage pregnancy, as well as key decision makers in the community. You should draw on such existing resources as:

- Community organizations which serve youth such as the Girls Clubs, YWCA, Girl Scouts, Boys Clubs, and 4H;
- Synagogues and churches;
- Public agencies which provide services to young mothers in the areas of health, education, social service, welfare, juvenile justice, and employment;
- Volunteer organizations such as the Junior League, the Kiwanis Clubs, Rotary Clubs, Lions Clubs;
- Social activist groups such as the National Organization for Women;
- Business groups such as the Chamber of Commerce;
- Health agencies such as hospitals, health maintenance organizations, or Planned Parenthood;
- Advocacy groups such as the League of Women Voters and the Parent Teacher Associations of local schools.

For practical assistance in forming and maintaining your community coalition, you may wish to consult with one or more of the following experts:

- Alice Radosh
  Coordinator, Adolescent Pregnancy and Parenting Services
  Office of the Mayor, New York City
  250 Broadway, Room 1410
  New York, New York 10007
  (212) 566-3450

Ms. Radosh, the former director of the Brooklyn Teen Pregnancy Network, is in a unique position to pull together ad hoc coalitions, and to work with established coalitions on improving service delivery.

- Rhoda Schulzinger
  Director, Full Access and Rights to Education Coalition (FARE)
  12 West 37th Street
  New York, N.Y. 10018
  (212) 564-9220

FARE's comprehensive advocacy approach employs a combination of strategies including research, community education, organizing, administrative negotiation, and monitoring to address issues concerning equity in education and employment for young women such as child care for students who are parents.

- Jeanne Lindsay
  6595 San Haroldo Way
  Buena Park, California 90620
  (714) 828-1998

Ms. Lindsay has written several books for young parents and those who care about them. She is expert regarding West Coast teen pregnancy coalitions.

- Tony Brown
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NOAPP convenes annually, publishes a national newsletter, and provides information about regional and state coalitions.

- Audrey Hutchinson
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This task force was formed when the City Council President, Carol Bellamy, requested community experts to recommend new strategies aimed at improving services for sexually active, pregnant, and parenting teens.

- Joseph Cocozza
  Executive Director of the New York State Council on Children and Families which staffs the Governor's Task Force on Adolescent Pregnancy
  Mayor Erasmus Corning Tower Building
  Empire State Plaza
  Albany, NY 12223

This task force was called together by Governor Mario Cuomo and is focused on issues related to teen pregnancy programs and community awareness of the problem.

Step Two: Assets Needs and Resources

It is important for any coalition to develop a reputation for knowing all the facts and issues connected with its primary policy and program focus. Your group's initial task should be to gather as much information as possible on the nature and extent of teenage sexual activity, pregnancy, and parenthood in your community.

First, check to see if any state or local public or private organizations have compiled such data. For example:

- Agencies concerned with youth or health such as the Bureau of Vital Statistics, or the child health division or family planning department of your local health department.

- Local affiliates of Planned Parenthood, the March of Dimes, the Urban League, the Family Services Association, the Salvation Army, or the Junior League.

Second, request information from national organizations. The Alan Guttmacher Institute in New York City has data on adolescent pregnancy and family planning service availability for every county in the nation. The Children's Defense Fund in Washington, D.C., has started a nationwide Adolescent Pregnancy Child Watch to monitor services for sexually active and pregnant teens and for young parents. The National Child Labor Committee in New York City, as this book demonstrates, is actively involved in helping to promote employment and training for parenting and pregnant teenagers. The office of Adolescent Pregnancy and Parenting of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in Washington, D.C., is concerned with teen pregnancy problems throughout the country.

Third, if you cannot locate an existing statistical description of your target population, you should develop one yourself using data from public and private sources. You still need to answer some of these questions:

- How many young women are there living in the area who are between the ages of twelve and twenty?

- How many of them gave birth in the last year?

- How many obtained abortions?

- How do rates of pregnancy, birth, or abortion vary by neighborhood?

- How many teenage mothers are receiving A.F.D.C. either on their own or through their families?

Fourth, you will also need a picture of the existing service network. To identify resources, consult local directories of social welfare agencies and organizations which serve youth. Survey service providers, public officials, and community leaders. Your questions might include:

- Which institutions serve sexually active pregnant and parenting teens?

- What services do they offer?

- Where are they located?

- How many teenage parents live near these services?

- Is transportation to services a problem?

- For how long may a teen parent use services?

- Are fees charged?

- What is the training and attitude of the staff who serve these youngsters?

- Are special approaches to service delivery used for these teenagers?

- Are child care arrangements available?

- Do services address young fathers?

- Are there services which young parents fail to use? Why?

Step Three: Identify Problems

Having completed a thorough assessment of needs and resources, you will be able to evaluate the adequacy of your community's service delivery system. Are there gaps in service? What barriers exist to keep young parents from obtaining the help they need? Besides identifying specific deficiencies in programs, you will need to determine whether changes must be made in public policies or in their administration.

Step Four: Set Priorities

Identify the problems you want to address and define your position. Be realistic about what you can accomplish. Try to coordinate your work with other community coalitions. Consider that you will need some early success and visibility, and take that into account as you set priorities. Consider a broad range of options, including:

- Monitoring the private and public sector and advocating for changes in the policies which guide service priorities;
- Replicating components of promising service models;
- Using the media to sensitize the community to the problems associated with teenage pregnancy, and to reach young people with messages about asssuming responsibility for using contraceptives;
- Lobbying and producing public education materials to influence legislators, administrators, and public opinion;
- Providing special training for the staff of agencies which deal with teen parents.

Step Five: Plan an Action Agenda

Determine your objectives and your strategies for realizing them. Lay out a timetable and delegate responsibilities. Keep in mind that, at least in the early stages of their development, coalitions should:

- Attempt to make the most extensive use possible of existing institutions;
- Tackle projects which offer a reasonable chance of producing demonstrable results;
- Not count heavily on receiving large grants from private corporations and foundations, but concentrate on devising innovative ways to use available public funds;
- Enlist the support and collaboration of as many public officials, agency administrators, and community leaders as possible.

Step Six: Proceed, Evaluate, Revise Plans, and Continue

The changes which are needed to improve services to sexually active, pregnant, and parenting teenagers are complex and challenging. They will take time. Periodically, you should review your coalition's progress and make strategic adjustments to your objectives.

Don't Give Up

A great deal of significant social change takes place in small steps, incrementally. To realize the far reaching improvements needed for teenage parents and their children, your coalition should keep your first efforts modest and meet regularly to share concerns. Upon this foundation, you can build more ambitious goals.

Chapter Four

A Brief Policy Perspective: Problems and Possibilities

"For an alarming number of the state's teenagers becoming a parent has become a part of growing up."

. . . Mario Cuomo, Governor of New York

The problems associated with teenage pregnancy have their roots in the failure of social institutions. Any strategy to improve the lives of young parents must focus on securing equality of opportunity for all young people so that there are fewer incentives to choose premature parenthood, and so that those youngsters who do bear children have a better chance of keeping up with their peers.

The financial resources families and communities need to help young people grow up must be adequate to the task. Current funding levels are not sufficient, which places a tremendous burden on parents to supplement the services public institutions offer. Middle and upper middle income families can manage this; lower income families usually cannot. The stress of trying to care for children without sufficient financial resources contributes to family instability and disorder.

A primary concern for those working on behalf of young parents must therefore be to convince policy makers — particularly at the federal level — to alter government spending priorities so that families are supported more effectively as they nurture and guide their children. Family support centers, excellence and equity in education, a reduction in youth unemployment rates, subsidies for child care, opportunities for enriched pre-school education, an adequate supply of affordable housing, access to sports and arts activities, and improvements in sex education and family planning services are all critical to the well being of children and youth. A spiralling arms race is not.

Recent budget cutbacks place severe constraints on the capacity of institutions to respond appropriately to the needs of young parents. As a result, most programs are short-lived or oriented solely toward crises. The annual scrambling for funds is taxing and demoralizing for administrators and staffs of service agencies.

Nonetheless, there is still substantial public support available from federal, state, and local governments. These funds can and must be used to improve services for pregnant teenagers and teen parents. The resource organizations listed in this manual have a wealth of information about how to tap government funds to improve services.

In every community there are myriad policies, regulations, and bureaucratic practices, which need to be changed so that institutions are more responsive to pregnant teens and teen parents. For example:

- Many income maintenance workers routinely fail to inform young mothers of public subsidies for child care for women who continue their educations in training or at work.
- Youth employment programs have standards for attendance, which young mothers cannot always meet.
- Schools offer little encouragement for pregnant teens and teen parents to remain.
- Teenagers who are eligible for or who are receiving Medicaid are often not informed of their right to use reproductive health care services without parental consent.

Finally, a large number of health, education, and social service programs which target high

risk teens must broaden their focus to include pregnant and parenting teens. School-based vocational and cooperative education programs should make a special effort to serve more young mothers.

Trying to mesh local, state, and federal funding policies causes local institutions, which rely on public funds, considerable difficulty and reduces the quality of the available services. For example, geographical areas in which there are substantial needs often vie unsuccessfully with more affluent communities which have fewer needs, but superior grantsmanship skills. A state coalition is in a useful position to address this issue by evaluating the problems and meeting with the appropriate policy makers.

Our policies of neglect have a price — perhaps one that is greater than the cost of prevention. It may never be possible to measure that price precisely, but surely it is fair to note that while the United States has a far more limited range of basic health and welfare programs than many other industrialized countries, it has a far higher rate of teenage parenthood. The social consequences of teenage pregnancy and parenthood sugggest that an alternative approach — an approach which would focus primarily on shoring up the capacity of basic social institutions to nurture and guide children — might be more effective and ultimately less costly.

Chapter Five

Recommendations: The Advocacy Agenda

Any serious attempt to improve the lives of teenage parents must entail a national commitment to policy reform. Sensible approaches to the problem must be forthcoming, both through establishing special community programs specifically designed for teen parents and through increasing the responsiveness of mainstream institutions to the needs of these young people. After analyzing our own findings, as well as the research, case experience and advice of others, the National Child Labor Committee recommends that we strive together to:

Make excellence and equity in public education a top priority.

In all aspects of their schooling, young women must be as seriously prepared for work as are young men. Vocational programs, such as vocational-technical high schools, work-study programs, and cooperative education should no longer be segregated by sex, with girls relegated to low paying, low status occupations. These programs must aggressively recruit more pregnant teens and teen parents. Schools must find new ways to attract and retain young mothers. We recommend establishing school-based child care centers or referral services; special educational and counseling programs; and a case management process which will ensure that young women get the personal attention they need.

Use obstetrical care services and A.F.D.C. offices to identify young mothers who are at risk of failing to develop the capacity to be economically independent.

Link these young women with community agencies which can offer intensive support, case management, training, and other assistance.

Support collaborative efforts among community groups.

These coalitions can act as advocates for the local and state policy changes, which will enhance services for teen parents and improve interagency cooperation.

Reduce the rate of youth unemployment.

Targeting resources to improve the literacy, job readiness, and occupational skills of the nation's poor young people. Encourage sex equity for young women in traditional youth employment programs by providing child care assistance. Help young mothers choose occupational training which will lead to jobs with wages sufficient to maintain a household with children. Continue to explore better ways to create jobs and support policies which work toward full employment.

Increase funding for child care subsidies for poor parents.

Parents who are working or enrolled in a job training program require enough subsidy to obtain consistent, high quality care for their children. Such care depends on securing decent wages and benefits for child care workers.

Provide incentives for communities to develop family support centers with a self-help focus.

Expand enriched pre-school education programs for disadvantaged children.

Encourage parent participation in their children's schools from the very beginning. Help parents become effective educational advocates for their children.

Alter the structure of the income maintenance system to increase incentives for women to pursue employment training.

Maintain teenagers access to contraception and abortion.

Promote service models — such as school-based clinics, which increase the likelihood that teens will use contraceptives responsibly.

Chapter Six

Additional Resources

This chapter provides information on additional resources you might want to consult about improving employment and other important services for young parents.

Organizations Concerned with Teenage Pregnancy

The following organizations are especially concerned with issues related to serving sexually active, pregnant and parenting teens:

Administration for Children, Youth and Families
Office of Public Information and Education
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Post Office Box 1182
Washington, D.C. 20013

The Alan Guttmacher Institute
360 Park Avenue South
New York, NY 10010

American Library Association
Young Adult Services
50 East Huron
Chicago, IL 60611

American Public Health Association
1015 Fifteenth Street
Washington, D.C. 20005-9970

Center for Disease Control
Bureau of State Services
Atlanta, GA 30333

Center for Early Adolescence
The University of North Carolina
School of Public Health
Chapel Hill, NC 27514

Center for Population and Family Health
Columbia University School of Public Health
60 Haven Avenue
New York, NY 10032

Center for Population Options
2031 Florida Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20009

Office of Adolescent Pregnancy Programs
US Department of Health & Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Room 725-H
Washington, D.C. 20201

Planned Parenthood Federation of America
810 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10019

Sex Information & Education Council of the US (SIECUS)
80 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10011

Society for Adolescent Medicine
Post Office Box 3462
Granada Hills, CA 91344

Youth Practitioners Network
Brandeis University
Waltham, MA 02254

Publications about Teenage Parents and Employment

The following publications address issues specific to employment assistance for teenage parents.

- "Teenagers as Parents and Providers," in *New Generation,* Volume. 63, No. 3, Fall 1983 (National Child Labor Committee, 1501 Broadway, Room 1111, New York, NY 10036).

- *Job Tips: A Youth Employment Program Operations Manual.* (Boston YWCA, 140 Clarendon Street, Boston, MA 02116).

- "How Will I Support My Baby?" Administrator's Guide to Vocational Programming for Adolescent Parents. (Grants Planning and Coordination Unit, Department of Manpower Development, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Charles Hurley Building, Government Center, Boston, MA 02114).

- *Improving Services to Youth Parents Through CETA.* (National Association of Counties, 440 First Street, NW, Washington, DC 20001, or write the Superintendent of Documents, US Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402).

- *A Guide to Employment and Training for Adolescent Parents.* (Consortium on Education for Employment, National Governors' Association, Hall of the States, 444 North Capitol Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20001).

- *Working with Teen Parents: A Program Development Handbook.* National Council of Negro Women, Inc., 815 Second Avenue, New York, NY 10017.

- *Comprehensive Services for the Teenage Mother: A Program Guide.* (Girls Clubs of America, 206 Lexington Avenue, New York, NY 10016).

- *Project Redirection: Conclusions on a Program for Pregnant and Parenting Teens.* (Forthcoming in 1985 from Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, 3 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10016).

Programs Discussed in "Time For Transition"

The following programs are discussed in Chapter Two:

Adolescent Mothers Initiative Program
2706 South Clairborne Avenue
New Orleans, LA 70125
(504) 897-3744

Contact: Emma Broman, Executive Director
National Council of Negro Women of Greater
New Orleans, Inc.

Aunt Martha's Youth Service Center, Inc.
221 Plaza
Park Forest, IL 60466
(312) 747-2701, 02, 03

Contact: Kathy Miner, Administrator
Advocacy and Health

Warren Wood
Coordinator of Youth Employment Services

Bridge Over Troubled Waters
147 Tremont at West Street
Boston, MA 02111
(617) 423-9575

Contact: Sister Barbara Whelan
Executive Director

Center for Youth Services
921 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE
Washington, D.C. 20003
(202) 543-5707

Contact: Myra King
Director

Center for Public Advocacy Research
12 West 37 Street
New York, NY 10018

Child Welfare League of America
67 Irving Place
New York, NY 10003

Children's Defense Fund
122 "C" Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20001

Family Resource Coalition
230 North Michigan Ave.
Suite 1265
Chicago, Ill. 60601

FARE Coalition
12 West 37th Street
New York, NY 10018

Fatherhood Project
Bank Street College of Education
610 West 112 Street
New York, NY 10025

High Scope Educational Research Foundation
600 North River Street
Ypsilanti, MI 98197

Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation
3 Park Avenue
New York, NY 10016

National Association of Social Workers
7981 Eastern Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20785

National Child Labor Committee
1501 Broadway
Room 1111
New York, NY 10036

National Clearing House for Family Planning Information
Post Office Box 2225
Rockville, MD 50852

National March of Dimes
1275 Mamaraneck Avenue
White Plains, NY 10605

National Organization Concerned with Adolescent Pregnancy and Parenting
5123 West Fourth Street
Forth Worth, TX 76102

Comprehensive Adolescent Parenting Program
(formerly "Job Tips")
Boston YWCA
140 Clarendon Street
Boston, MA 02116
(617) 536-7940

Contact: Mary L. Reed
Director

Comprehensive Services for School Age Parents
1200 Walnut Street, 2nd Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19107
(215) 545-1190

Contact: Miriam F. Mednic
Director

Expanding Options for Teenage Mothers
New York Technical College
250 Jay Street
Brooklyn, NY 11201
(718) 643-3221

Contact: Sandy Weinbaum

New Futures School
2120 Louisiana NE
Albuquerque, NM 87110
(505) 884-7630

Contact: Julie Sisneros

Options for Young Parents
3455 West 72nd Avenue
Westminister, CO 80030
(303) 428-2575

Contact: Karen Schmidt, Director
Mary Sticklein, Vocational Coordinator

Project Operation T.E.A.M., Training
and Employment for Adolescent Mothers
Urban Affairs Corporation
2815 Reid Street
Houston, TX 77026
(713) 692-7036

Contact: Donna Bryant
Executive Director

Project Redirection - Via de Amistad
1402 South Central Avenue
Phoenix, AZ 85004
(602) 258-3641

Contact: Maria Ramirez
Employment Coordinator

Summer Youth Employment Program for Parenting Teens
YWCA New York City
610 Lexington Avenue
New York, NY 10022
(212) 755-4500

Contact: Joanne Sexton, Director

Skills Get Jobs
Brooklyn YWCA
30 Third Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11217
(718) 875-1190

Contact: Doretha Tillie, Director

Teenage Parent Alternative School
Wayne County Intermediate School District
2000 Pagel
Lincoln Park, MI 48146
(313) 386-1250

Contact: Drema Raupp, Director

Young Parent Program
State of Illinois
Department of Public Aid
2036 South Michigan, 4th Floor
Chicago, IL 60616

Contact: Joyce Leviton, Project Manager

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McGee, Elizabeth. *Too Little, Too Late: Services for Teenage Parents*. New York: The Ford Foundation, 1982.

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Moore, Kristin A. and Richard F. Wertheimer. "Teenage Childbearing and Welfare: Preventive and Ameliorative Strategies." *Family Planning Perspectives*, 16(November/ December, 1984).

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Services for Sexually Active, Pregnant and Parenting Adolescents in New York City, New York: Center for Public Advocacy Research.

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The National Child Labor Committee was founded in 1904 to serve as an advocate for the education, health, safety, and fair employment for young workers. During its first forty years, NCLC was in the forefront of the fight against child labor, a fight that was won in the fields, factories, school rooms and court houses of this nation. Today unemployment among youth is a major focus of the Committee's work. NCLC works to improve employment opportunities for young people, to expand the quality and availability of job programs, and to secure a solid basic education for all young people. In addition, NCLC assists the children of migrant farm workers in schools nationwide, and oversees the protection of youth from hazardous and abusive work.